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Adelaide Morris
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Morris

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Captain Shaw's C of E School

Following my visit to your school on 20 May 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- Design curriculums in science, music, art, languages, and physical education (PE) that help pupils to build logically on what they know and can do already.

Context

Since the previous inspection, three members of the governing body have stepped down and three new governors have been appointed. The age range of the school has been extended to admit two-year-old children.

Since September 2020, this small school has faced many challenges relating to staff absence caused by COVID-19. Your actions to improve the school have continued at a slower pace than you originally intended.

Main findings

You, the school staff and governors have identified the right actions to improve the school. Following the previous inspection, you started to redesign the school's curriculum so that it is suitably ambitious and meets the needs of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Your initial work to drive forward improvements to the curriculum have provided firm footings on which further developments can rest.

Initially, you worked to improve the mathematics curriculum, followed by a focus on developing your curriculum plans in English, geography, history, personal, social and health education, relationships education and health education. In doing so, you carefully considered the skills and knowledge that children acquire in the early years and built from there. In these subjects, you have implemented reliable assessment systems that allow teachers to check what pupils know and remember. In these subjects, teachers deliver the curriculum effectively, helping pupils, including children in the early years, to make links with earlier learning.

Due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, you have not had the opportunity to replicate this work in other subjects such as science, art, music, languages, and PE. Pupils continue to study these subjects. However, teachers do not sequence learning well, preventing pupils from building effectively on what they have learned previously.

You have ensured that reading remains a high priority. You have continued to develop consistency in the approach to the teaching of reading across the school. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 benefit from daily phonics and reading sessions. Children have access to books and resources to help them develop their reading at home. You ensure that staff carefully match books to the sounds that children practise in school. This is supporting children and pupils to develop their confidence and read with greater accuracy. You continue to provide a range of support for those pupils in key stage 2 who need extra help with phonics and reading.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They use the information that you provide to challenge leaders effectively. Since the most recent monitoring visit, they have improved their own knowledge about the curriculum for pupils with SEND. They are using this knowledge to ask you questions about how well teachers adapt curriculums to meet the needs of this group of pupils.

Additional support

You value the support and challenge provided by the local authority. For example, you have used the local authority support to help leaders plan and implement the improved curriculum plans. In addition, you have drawn on this extra support to redesign the systems for checking on what pupils have learned and remembered.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and the other class teacher. I met with two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I visited lessons and spoke with pupils. I observed pupils read to a trusted adult. I scrutinised the school development plan and subject curriculum plans. I examined a range of safeguarding documents. I considered the 17 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, the 10 free-text comments and the nine responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Carlisle, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cumbria. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

John Donald
Her Majesty's Inspector